

VZCZCXRO4211
PP RUEHBI RUEHCI
DE RUEHCI #0420 2581021
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 151021Z SEP 06
FM AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1162
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1041
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 0407
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 0407
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM JECG HONOLULU HI
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 1421

UNCLAS CALCUTTA 000420

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: JHARKHAND'S NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT FALLS

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: On September 14 Jharkhand Chief Minister Arjun Munda resigned as independent party members defected from his National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government to the opposition United Progressive Alliance (UPA). With the fall of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)-led NDA government, the UPA will form a new government in Jharkhand, lead by Madhu Koda, an independent party Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). Koda will be sworn-in as new state Chief Minister on Sunday, September 17. Koda was the Parliamentary Affairs and Mines Minister in his predecessor, Munda's 18-month old government. The collapse of the short-lived NDA government is symptomatic of the weak governance in Jharkhand. END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) The UPA will form a new state government with the support of 43 MLAs, as compared to 38 backing the NDA, in the 82-member Jharkhand Assembly. (One nominated member does not have voting right.) Regional party Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), supporter of the UPA at the national level, is the dominant party in the state UPA coalition. The JMM is backed by Union Railroad Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The Congress Party will likely support the state government from "outside" and will not have any ministers in the new government.

¶3. (U) A pending issue is the potential expulsion of three MLAs (all UPA supporters) who are facing disqualification for violating the national Anti-Defection law. Speaker Inder Singh Namdhari, who was supposed to make a decision on the expulsion on February 14, said that he needs more time to decide. However, the Speaker's final decision is unlikely to impede the UPA's ability to form a new government.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: The collapse of the NDA government reflects the continued weak and erratic governance in Jharkhand. Political leaders are primarily concerned with jockeying for power, rather than responding to the needs of managing the state's many problems of poverty, poor public health and a growing Maoist insurgency. The few independent MLA's wield a disproportionate and disruptive influence in the dissolution and formation of state governments. The independents' political horse-trading provides them key ministerial portfolios, facilitating opportunities for rent seeking and patronage, and serves to exacerbate the already chaotic politics in Jharkhand.

JARDINE